

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT BACKGROUND PAPER VII: FISH AND WHALES

1. JAPAN IS THE WORLD'S LEADING FISHING AND WHALING NATION. FISH ACCOUNT FOR 51 PERCENT OF JAPANESE ANIMAL PROTEIN CONSUMPTION AND WHALES FOR ABOUT 10 PERCENT. JAPANESE EAT OVER TEN TIMES AS MUCH FISH AS DO AMERICANS ON PER CAPITA BASIS. FISHING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES ARE A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY WITH OVER HALF MILLION WORKERS. JAPAN EXPORTS OVER 1/2 BILLION DOLLARS OF FISH AND SHELLFISH (40 PERCENT TO US) BUT IMPORTS TWICE AS MUCH (9 PERCENT FROM US).

2. JAPANESE ARE CONSCIOUS OF AND CONCERNED ABOUT CONDITION OF FISHERY RESOURCES BECAUSE VITALITY AND SURVIVAL OF JAPAN'S FISHERIES DEPEND ON MAINTENANCE OF RESOURCES AT LEVELS PERMITTING GREATEST YIELD. THEY CONSIDER US VIEWS ON CONSERVATION UNDULY RESTRICTIVE, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IN NORTH PACIFIC AND BELIEVE THEY BEAR DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF BURDEN OF SOME CONSERVATION STEPS.

3. COMMISSIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING CONVENTION OF 1946 AND THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES CONVENTION OF 1953 PROVIDE CONTINUING FORUMS FOR NEGOTIATING THE FISHING INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES AND FOR EXCHANGING SCIENTIFIC DATA AND FORMULATING CONSERVATION PROGRAMS. USG BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT TWENTY YEARS OF FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPAN HAVE LEFT MANY SPECIES OVER-  
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FISHED AND HAVE FAILED TO CONVINCE JAPAN OF THE NEED FOR

WHAT THE US CONSIDERS TO BE ADEQUATE CONSERVATION MEASURES.

4. IN RECENT YEARS THE FOLLOWING SPECIES HAVE BEEN SOURCES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE US AND JAPAN:

A. WHALES. US STRONGLY BACKED 1972 UN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE'S RECOMMENDATION FOR TEN-YEAR MORATORIUM ON WHALING AND SUPPORTED PROPOSAL FOR MORATORIUM AT 1973 AND 1974 MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC), WHERE SOVIETS AND JAPANESE SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSED PASSAGE. IN 1973 JAPAN REJECTED IWC QUOTAS ON GROUNDS THAT SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS DID NOT JUSTIFY SEVERITY OF RESTRICTIONS ON A VITAL INDUSTRY AND SOURCE OF LOW-COST PROTEIN FOR JAPANESE PEOPLE. HOWEVER, JAPAN'S 1973-74 CATCH DID NOT EXCEED IWC QUOTA, AND AT 1974 IWC MEETING JAPAN AGREED TO ACCEPT IWC'S RECOMMENDATION THAT SELECTIVE MORATORIUM BE PLACED ON ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WHALES. JAPAN MAY FACE PROBLEM NEXT YEAR, WHEN IWC WILL DECIDE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT RECOMMENDATION.

B. BRISTOL BAY SALMON. THE GOJ HAS NEVER ACCEPTED THE US CONTENTION THAT THE 1953 CONVENTION'S PROTOCOL ON SALMON WAS INTENDED TO PREVENT JAPANESE EXPLOITATION OF SALMON ORIGINATING IN NORTH AMERICAN STREAMS. UNDER THIS PROTOCOL THE JAPANESE AGREED TO ABSTAIN FROM SALMON FISHING EAST OF 175 DEGREE WEST LONGITUDE, WHICH THE THEN AVAILABLE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE INDICATED WAS THE WESTERN LIMIT OF THE MIGRATION OF ALASKAN SALMON FROM BRISTOL BAY AND THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. BRISTOL BAY SALMON NOW ARE KNOWN TO CROSS THE ABSTENTION LINE IN LARGE NUMBERS, WHERE THEY ARE HARVESTED TOGETHER WITH SALMON FROM ASIAN STREAMS BY JAPAN'S HIGH SEAS SALMON FLEETS FISHING UNDER JAPAN-SOVIET AGREEMENTS. IN 1974 WHEN THE STATE OF ALASKA CLOSED BRISTOL BAY TO FISHING BECAUSE SALMON STOCKS WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE DECLINED TO A DANGEROUSLY LOW LEVEL, THE JAPANESE FISHING INDUSTRY AFTER LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS AGREED TO REFRAIN FROM FISHING IN PART OF THE LARGE SOVIET TREATY AREA WHERE BRISTOL BAY AND ASIAN SALMON ARE KNOWN TO INTERMINGLE. THE SALMON RUN WHICH RETURNED TO THE BRISTOL BAY SPAWNING GROUNDS IN 1974 WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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MUCH LARGER THAN EXPECTED, AND WHEN HIGH SEAS SALMON FISHING RESTRAINTS WERE DISCONTINUED, THE JAPANESE FLEETS TOOK LARGE NUMBERS OF IMMATURE SALMON WHICH WOULD HAVE SPAWNED IN 1975.

C. CRAB AND HALIBUT. THE JAPANESE HAVE CEASED FISHING SOME AREAS OF THE BERING SEA AND GULF OF ALASKA DURING PART OF EACH YEAR TO CONSERVE HALIBUT AND KING AND TANNER

CRAB STOCKS OF IMPORTANCE TO US FISHERMEN. QUOTA CEIL-  
INGS FOR JAPANESE CRAB CATCHES ALSO HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED.  
HOWEVER, THE US BELIEVES THERE IS CONTINUING EVIDENCE OF  
OVERFISHING OF BOTH OF THESE STOCKS PRIMARILY THROUGH  
INCIDENTAL CATCHES ASSOCIATED WITH JAPANESE FISHING FOR  
ALASKAN POLLOCK.  
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